

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 29573 271247Z

53

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 HEW-04 TRSE-00 MED-02 DEAE-00

CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 SNM-02 USIA-06

NSC-05 OES-06 OMB-01 PA-01 PRS-01 EUR-12 /075 W

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R 270947Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5226

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR

SUBJ: TRANSFER OF 1977 EAST ASIA NARCOTICS CONFERENCE TO BANGKOK

REF: STATE 263321

SUMMARY: EMBASSY BELIEVES 1977 EA NARCOTICS CONFERENCE WILL BE MORE USEFUL IF HELD IN BANGKOK RATHER THAN IN CHIANG MAI. NEW RTG IS TAKING STRONGER PUBLIC POSITION AGAINST NARCOTICS THAN ANY OF ITS PREDECESSORS, AND CONFERENCE IN BANGKOK AT SEAT OF GOVERNMENT COULD SERVE TO ENCOURAGE FURTHER ACTION AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFIC. EMBASSY IS, OF COURSE, BETTER ABLE TO SUPPORT A CONFERENCE OF THIS SORT THAN CONSULATE IN CHIANG MAI.

ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT APPROVE BANGKOK AS VENUE FOR 1977 EA NARCOTICS CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN VIEW OF TRANSFORMATION IN POLITICAL SITUATION IN THAILAND SINCE MILITARY TAKEOVER OF RTG ON OCT 6, EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT VENUE OF 1977 EAST ASIA NARCOTICS CONFERENCE BE BANGKOK RATHER THAN CHIANG MAI, AS PROPOSED IN REFTTEL.

2. NEW RTG HAS EXPRESSED MUCH MORE HIGH-LEVEL CONCERN OVER NARCOTICS PROBLEMS ACROSS THE BOARD THAN ITS PREDECESSORS.

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 29573 271247Z

PRIME MINISTER THANIN KRAIWICHIAN, IN HIS SECOND TV ADDRESS TO

THE NATION OCT 17, PRAISED NARCOTICS PROBLEMS AS AMONG THAILAND'S MOST URGENT PROBLEMS. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE OCT 25 GEN KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL (THE SUCCESSOR TO THE NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM COUNCIL DISSOLVED ON OCT 22), SAID THAT THAILAND PLANS TO SET UP "A STRONG AND EFFECTIVE AGENCY TO COMBAT NARCOTICS." KRIANGSAK ADDED, "WE ARE GIVING TOP PRIORITY TO THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST NARCOTICS. PRIME MINISTER THANIN KRAIWICHIAN HAD SOME DISCUSSIONS WITH ME ON THIS MATTER IN THE LAST FEW DAYS....WE ARE GOING TO ACT AGAINST NOT ONLY NARCOTICS MERCHANTS BUT ALSO OFFICIALS INVOLVED WITH THEM."

3. ONE OR EVEN TWO STRONG PUBLIC STATEMENTS DO NOT NECESSARILY GUARANTEE A SUBSTANTIAL, FORCEFUL CHAMPAIGN, AND MUCH WILL DEPEND ON HOW THE NEW THAI GOVERNMENT CARRIES THROUGH ON THE GOOD INTENTIONS EXPRESSED ABOVE. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS TO US THAT, WITH THE FORTHCOMING DELIVERY OF THE FIVE HELICOPTERS, PLUS THE PERSONAL INTEREST TOP LEVEL THAI FIGURES ARE DEVOTING TO THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM, WE WILL GET MUCH MORE MILEAGE OUT OF HOLDING THE EA NARCOTICS CONFERENCE IN BANGKOK THAN IN CHIANG MAI.

4. THE EMBASSY'S FACILITIES FOR SUPPORTING THE 1977 EA NARCOTICS CONFERENCE, OF COURSE, ARE MUCH MORE EXTENSIVE THAN THOSE AVAILABLE TO THE CONSULATE IN CHIANG MAI. CLASSIFIED MEETING SPACE IN THE CONSULATE IS CLEARLY INADEQUATE, AND LOCAL, OFFICIAL GROUND TRANSPORTATION TO MOVE THE DELEGATES FROM AIRPORT TO HOTEL AND FROM HOTEL TO CONSULATE IS SADLY LACKING. BY CONTRAST, IF CONFERENCE SITE IS BANGKOK, THERE ARE ADEQUATE CONFERENCE ROOMS AVAILABLE, AND ALL OF THE MISSION'S COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES ARE READILY TO HAND, TO SAY NOTHING OF AMPLE HOTEL AND TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES. FURTHERMORE, THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM IN BOOKING SEATS ON THE THAI AIRWAYS (DOMESTIC AIRLINE) FLIGHTS THAT SERVICE CHIANG MAI. SPACE IS INVARIABLY AT A PREMIUM ON THESE FLIGHTS, AND IT IS PROBLEMATICAL WHETHER ALL THE CONFEREES COULD BE TRANSPORTED TO CHIANG MAI (ASSUMING THEIR ARRIVALS AT BANGKOK ARE STAGGERED) BY THE OPENING DATE.

5. AN INTERPOL CONFERENCE ON NARCOTICS WAS HELD IN CHIANG LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 29573 271247Z

MAI, JULY 12-16. HOWEVER, IT SHOULD BE RECALLED THAT THAT MEETING WAS AT THE INVITATION OF THE RTG, AND OFFICIAL THAI RESOURCES IN CHIANG MAI WERE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT IT.

6. IT OCCURS TO US THAT WE MIGHT MAKE USE OF PRIME MINISTER THANIN'S EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER NARCOTICS PROBLEMS TO INVITE HIM TO ADDRESS, OR EVEN TO OPE, 1977 EA NARCOTICS CONFERENCE. FOR THIS OCCASION (AS WELL AS FOR MANY OF THE SESSIONS AND

WORKSHOPS) WE COULD INVITE NARCOTICS ATTACHES AND OFFICIALS FROM OTHER EMBASSIES IN BANGKOK (SUCH AS BRITISH, CANADIAN, AUSTRALIAN, DUTCH, FRENCH, AND JAPANESE), GIVING AUDIENCE AN INTERNATIONAL FLAVOR THAT MIGHT SUIT THANIN'S NEEDS. WE BELIEVE IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO ENCOURAGE THANIN--POSSIBLY ON SUCH AN OCCASION--TO STRENGTHEN EXTENT OF THAI OFFICIAL COMMITMENT TO ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAMS.

7. ACTION RECOMMENDED: IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT DEPARTMENT APPROVE BANGKOK AS VENUE FOR 1977 EA NARCOTICS CONFERENCE.  
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